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Die Gruft der heiligen Caecilia in den Katakomben zu Rom.

Zu den interessantesten Alterthümern der "ewigen Stadt" Rom gehören unstreitig die Katakomben, d. h., jene unterirdischen Grabgewölbe aus der Zeit der Christenverfolgungen; dort sind die ersten Christen gewandelt, dort haben sie gebetet und die hl. Geheimnisse gefeiert, dort haben sie Wohnung und Zuflucht gefunden in den Zeiten blutiger Verfolgungen.

Von den verschiedenen Katakomben sind die merkwürdigsten jene des hl. Kallistus, in welchen sich die Papstgruft befindet. Dasselbst ist auch die Gruft der hl. Cäcilia. In dem von der Innsbrucker Ursulinen-Chorfrau Neusee herausgegebenen Lesebuche für österr. Mädchenbürgerschulen findet sich darüber (nach P. Albert Kuhn) Folgendes: Die Gruft der hl. Cäcilia ist nur durch einen Gang von der Papstgruft getrennt, die Wände stossen in einem Theil an einander. Die hl. Cäcilia gehörte unstreitig der edlen Familie der Cäcilier an, denen der Grundbesitz über die Kallistuskatakombe eigen war. Schon in früher Jugend weihte sie sich Gott. Einem edlen aber heidnischen Jüngling zur Braut bestimmt, beredete sie ihn, am Vermählungstage den Bischof Urban in der Katakombe des Prätextatus aufzusuchen.

Von diesem im Glauben an Christus unterrichtet, empfing er die Taufe mit seinem Bruder Tiburtius. Zusammen erlangten sie bald die Palme des Martyrthums. Um dann auch an der hl. Cäcilia, ohne Aufsehen zu erregen, in der Stille die Todesstrafe zu vollziehen, nahm der Richter Almachius zu einem Verfahren Zuflucht, das unter ähnlichen Verhältnissen im heidnischen Rom gebräuchlich war. Er liess die Jungfrau in dem Schwitzbad des Hauses einschliessen. Rings um die Wände des Gemaches liefen bleierne Röhren; — Bruchstücke sind heute noch in dem Badezimmer neben der Kirche der hl. Cäcilia in Rom zu sehen. Diese wurden durch eine gesteigerte Dampfströmung so erhitzt, dass die Heilige mit der glühenden Luft den Tod einathmen musste. Einen Tag und eine Nacht blieb Cäcilia in dem Glühofen, ohne dass "des

Feuers Hauch sie berührte"; ein himmlischer Thau erquickte sie, wie die drei Jünglinge im Feuerofen zu Babylon. Das Wunder brachte den Richter aus der Fassung und gegen seinen Willen musste er das Blut der edlen Römerin vergiessen, wenn sie sterben sollte. Er schickte den Henkersknecht, damit er der Jungfrau den Kopf abschlage. Beim Anblick der edlen Heiligen mochte der Arm wohl auch zagen und Fassung verlieren: er führte drei Hiebe, — einen vierten gestattete das Gesetz nicht. Die Heilige lag in ihrem Blute, aber Leben und Seele waren noch in ihr. So fanden sie die Christen, als sie in das Gemach eindringen, nachdem der Henkersknecht bestürzt entflohen. Mit Tüchern trockneten sie das Blut auf, welches aus den Wunden der Märtyrin geflossen. Drei Tage lang schwebte Cäcilia noch zwischen Leben und Tod.

Diese Frist hatte sie sich von Gott erbeten, um ihren Palast dem Bischof Urbanus zu übergeben, damit er zur Kirche umgewandelt werde. Unter dem Segen des Oberhirten schlief sie hinüber in das bessere Leben. Ausgestreckt lag sie da, die Knie sanft angezogen, das Antlitz seitwärts zur Erde gekehrt, die Arme todesmüde ausgestreckt nebeneinander, im langen golddurchwirkten und nun auch mit dem Purpur des Blutes gefärbten Gewande. So wurde sie in einen Sarg von Cypressenholz gelegt, zu ihren Füßen lagen die Tücher und Schleier, womit die Christen ihr Blut gesammelt hatten; in den jüngst angelegten unterirdischen Gallerien an der appischen Strasse wurde der Sarg in einer Grabkammer dem Eingang gegenüber zu ebener Erde in einer Nische verschlossen. Hier ruhte Cäcilia bis zum Jahre 821. Damals führte der Pabst Paschalis V. die Reliquien von 2300 Martyrern in die Stadt, um sie vor Entweihung zu schützen, darunter auch die Schätze der Papstgruft. Das Grab der hl. Cäcilia konnte er nicht finden, und er glaubte schon dem Gerüchte, dass die Lombarden den hl. Leib entwendet hätten. Einige Zeit darauf wohnte Paschalis dem feierlichen Frühgottesdienst am Grabe des hl. Petrus bei.

Da senkte sich ein tiefer Schlummer auf seine Augenlieder, — Paschalis erzählt uns dieses selbst — und ein himmlisches Gesicht zeigte sich seinem geistigen Auge. Eine Jung-

frau mit schön edlen Zügen stand vor ihm, sie nannte sich Cäcilia und machte dem Papste Vorwürfe, dass er ihren Leib nicht auch übertragen hätte, sei er, Paschalis, ihrem Grabe doch so nahe gewesen, dass sie mit einander hätten reden können. Paschalis erneuerte seine Nachforschung und siehe, in einer Vertiefung der Mauer, welche nach Aussen sorgfältig geschlossen war, durch eine kaum 3 cm dicke Schichte von der Papstgruft getrennt, fand er einen Sarg von Cypressenholz und darin die Heilige, wie die Legende sie beschrieb, im golddurchwirkten Gewand, mit den Wunden am Halse, u. s. f.; zu ihren Füßen lagen die in das Blut getauchten Tücher. Der Körper war unversehrt. Paschalis verschloss den ehrwürdigen Leib, wie er ihn fand; nur den Sarg liess er mit Seide ausschlagen und über die Leiche ein seidenes Flortuch legen; dann verschloss er den Schrein unter dem Hochaltar der Kirche der hl. Cäcilia.

Am Ausgange des sechzehnten Jahrhunderts liess Cardinal Sfondrati in dieser Kirche bauliche Aenderungen vornehmen.

Am 20. October 1599 wurde in Gegenwart mehrerer Zeugen das Grabgewölbe unter dem Altar geöffnet. In einem freien Raume fand man zwei Särge von weissem Marmor. Sofort wird der eine geöffnet: ein Sarg von Cypressenholz liegt darin. Man denke sich die heilige Rührung und die ungeduldige Neugierde der Anwesenden. Der Cardinal hebt den leichten, dünnen Sargdeckel ab: da liegt noch die hl. Cäcilia in der unaussprechlichen Majestät ihres Martyrthums, acht Jahrhunderte, seitdem sie Paschalis ebenso geschaut und verehrt. Ueber dem hl. Leibe liegt der seidene Flor, durch welchen das golddurchwirkte Gewand schimmert. Mit zitternder Hand hebt Sfondrati den Schleier weg. Da schlummert sie noch die hl. Jungfrau im langen Gewande mit den Spuren des Blutes, auf der rechten Seite liegend die Hände dem Körper entlang ausgestreckt, das Haupt geheimnisvoll seitwärts zur Erde geneigt, — ganz unversehrt wie im tiefen, tiefen Schlaf, zu Füßen lagen die blutgetränkten Tücher. — Ganz Rom sah die Heilige in ihrer unvergleichlichen heiligen Schönheit. Nach einigen Wochen wurde der Sarg wieder verschlossen. Ueber dem Grabgewölbe baute der Cardinal Sfondrati einen kostbaren Altar; unter demselben liess er eine Statue aus weissem Marmor vom Bildhauer Stefano Maderno anbringen mit der Inschrift: "Siehe hier das Bild der hl. Jungfrau Cäcilia. Wie ich sie unversehrt im Grabe liegen sah, ganz in derselben Körperlage stellte ich sie im Marmorstein dar."—*Kirchenmusikalische Vierteljahrschrift*.

Musical Impression and Expression

If a musical composition of artistic worth is to produce a true impression, it must be performed with expression. As a truism, this statement leaves nothing to be desired. Every musician of even moderate intelligence knows it, believes in it, and quotes it freely from his little book of wisdom. And yet, how many musical sins are not committed in the name of this truism, simply because its terms "impression" and "expression" are misunderstood, forgotten, or ignored.

The only true impression that music of artistic worth can make, is the impression of itself as a coherent whole. The composition must be made to sound again—at least approximately so—as the composer heard it in his fantasy; and, in the present supposition, he heard it not as an assortment or succession of juxtaposed details, but as a vital, vibrant whole.

Unity and coherence are as essential to true artistic impression and appreciation as they are to the work of art itself. The details of an artistic composition must be presented and heard not by themselves alone, but in their relations as well, — in their relations to one another and to the composition as a whole. These relations are the external bond of unity in a musical composition. Through all these relations and proportions of detail, as through so many arteries, there must course the very life-blood of music, warmed by that inner, unifying, and animating principle,—the soul of the music. And this soul must be felt by the listener, otherwise the music will fail of its true impression.

A musical performance that merely tickles the ear, is not a vehicle of soul; the impression received from a work of artistic merit so rendered is therefore inadequate and untrue. Let us, in this connection, first consider a performance that is technically perfect, but nothing more. What is it but a display of the lifeless tonal form of a musical composition? But it is brilliant, and it is admired, is it not? Admired, indeed; no question as to that. No one denies that there are people who will stand in admiration over a beautiful corpse; but then, they admire—how long? with what profundity of emotion? and with what spiritual benefit to themselves?

Next, there are would-be artistic performances that wear the mask of soulfulness; their pretended artistry and soulfulness consists in the production of so-called "effects," such as excessive or unwarrantedly sudden contrasts;

exaggerated or uncalled for pathos; obtrusive stressing of delicate minutiae; blatancy; spectacular, angular precision; and disproportionate projection of musical details generally. A musical composition thus presented is simply torn asunder and dismembered. And the musical impression one gets from such performances is necessarily multiple, fragmentary, incoherent, and soulless. It, too, might be compared to the impression received by people who can bring themselves to admire the beauty of a corpse, seen not in its integrity, as in the case referred to above, but in its disjointed, truncated members, presented and held aloft, let us say, in a dissecting room by some young medico who exclaims as he exhibits: "See here—this beautiful arm; and here—this perfect leg!"—etc.

A disjointed and fragmentary impression cannot be a true impression of an artistic musical composition. Such a composition must be perceived and grasped integrally,—both in its matter and form; in its body and soul. Only so can it be made to live again as it lived with its author; only so can it move and sway the soul of the listener. If a concise statement of this truth were set up in bold letters and hung as a motto in every music studio, rehearsal room, and concert hall, the effect it might have upon students, performers, and audiences would help to bring back the invisible spirits of a Palestrina, a Lasso, a Bach, a Mozart, a Beethoven, and of other inhabitants of the musical Elysium, and induce them to hover near where now decorative busts are set upon pedestals, apparently to receive homage, but in reality to be mute witnesses of the frequent outrage of false musical imputation practiced upon the immortals whom they represent.

—ALBERT LOHMANN.

The meaning of the term "expression" is set forth by Señor Alberto Jonás, the distinguished Spanish pianist and teacher, as follows: "There is a great difference between shading and expression. Expression nearly always includes shading. But shading a piece may be accomplished without bringing to light the purpose, character, mood, spirit, atmosphere of the piece; without investing it with the personal equation of the performer—his own feelings, emotions, and thought, which he, both unconsciously as well as through volition, attunes to the thoughts, emotions, and feelings which swayed the composer as he created his work.

Shading a piece may be accomplished through a purely mechanical process, by reason only; although usually it is by an unconscious pro-

cess that our feelings dictate the distribution of lights and shadows, of *fortes* and *pianos*, crescendos and diminuendos. Shadings correspond to the heaviness or lightness of the drawing; to the intensity of the color applied to the painting. Shadings may, therefore, be considered synonymous with the greater or lesser volume and intensity of a sound.

But expression is the concomitant of all the piece awakened within us, whether directly or indirectly connected with the piece. Just as we perceive an object because a greater or lesser part of the rays that strike it are reflected to us, so *expression* is the reflection of the *impression* made on us by the tone poem and which we project from our own personality. But in order that this projection—this expression—may take place, our impressions must have been keen and strong. The deeper and stronger and keener these impressions have been, the more potently and convincingly will they be projected from ourselves through the medium of an instrument.

Therefore the first requisite for acquiring to a marked degree the power of expression is to possess, and carefully safeguard, a musically sensitive nature. This includes sensitiveness of the musical ear, which perceives the slightest difference and fluctuation in the pitch, volume, and color, or *timbre*, of the sound; sensitiveness of feeling for harmony, in its blending of consonant and dissonant sounds; sensitiveness as to the slightest change in the tempo, so that once the tempo of a piece is heard, it is never forgotten; sensitiveness to the rhythm and to the measure; sensitiveness to accentuation, touch, delicacy, strength, and, above all these, to the inner, glowing life of the composition, to its appeal to the intellectual faculties or to the emotions of man.

To express means to reproduce, with the inevitable alloy of our own individuality. To express may also be said to create new.

The moment we read, play or sing, or hear a piece sung or played, we receive an impression; and it is henceforth impossible for us to play or sing this piece without investing it with expression of some kind. This expression will be more marked if we read, play or sing this piece often, or hear it often sung or played, and also according to the greater or less freedom which we give to the impressions which the piece has produced on us. If we deny them utterance, if we stifle them, we run great risk of deadening or obliterating entirely the impressions made on us. Therefore if we wait for a special grand occasion on which we are to play a piece "with expression," we may find

only dryness and barrenness where the little, delicate blue flower of poetry was beginning to grow.

Play (or sing) "with expression" the moment you begin to play (or sing) at all. As your impression of the piece becomes more varied and deeper, your expression will likewise be richer, deeper, and broader. As new points of view, new sources of delight, or joy, or of sorrow are disclosed by studying the piece, playing it over and over, *thinking about it*, so new effects, new vibrant strings will seemingly be added to the instrument which under your fingers is evoking anew the magic life which slumbered in the silent symbols."

Keeping within the Speed Limit.

Perhaps the American craze for speed is today hurting organ playing more than any other thing. The aim of the recitalist seems to be to give an exhibition of technic, rather than an artistic musical performance; the question seems to be "how fast can I play it" not "how artistically." It have lately heard a number of first class organists ruin their programs by the excessive speed at which they have taken some of the pieces—I do not think that anyone who had heard Widor himself play his *Toccata* would want to take it at the breakneck speed that so many organists take it, or that anyone who heard Guilmant play his *Grand Choeur* at about his own metronome markings would wish to play it faster. Personally, I think that when a composer goes to the trouble of putting metronome marking on a piece of music, it is the duty of the player to be as particular to that marking as to the notes themselves, except where the acoustics of the building demand a change.

Above all, the acoustics of a building should be studied, especially by visiting organists. I have heard some of our leading recitalists play a splendid program when practicing in an empty church. Later, with the church full, the pieces played at the same tempo would sound muddy and all the beautiful effects of polyphony lost. The local organist, hearing the piece taken at this speed, naturally thinks it is right. Thus the seed of the speed evil is sown.

This fault is bound to show itself in loud pieces. The louder they are, the faster they are played. The average church postlude is taken at a speed that will ensure the organist finishing his last chord as the last person leaves the church. Can anything be more inartistic? What should we say of the orchestral conduc-

tor, the pianist, or the vocalist, if they took liberties with the composer's intentions as do the large majority of organists?

Let us then watch our musical speedometers, our metronomes, and see that we are within the speed limit. What care we if Mr. So and So plays it in three minutes and ten and a half seconds; let us be sure that we are following the composer's intentions, that our listeners are enjoying an artistic performance.

DR. ROLAND DIGGLE in *Etude*.

Notes.

Now hold your breath while you read of the blessing of the new organ at St. Boniface's Church in London, England. The following report is taken from the London Tablet of July 15:

"An impressive ceremony took place last Sunday at the German church, Adler street, E., when Bishop Butt blessed the new organ. His lordship was received at the church door by the children in white, and conducted to the altar, while the choir sang the "Ecce Sacerdos." After the blessing the organ sounded, and the crowded congregation joined in the hymn, "Grosser Gott, wir loben Dich" (O God, Thee we praise), with the magnificent accompaniment of the new instrument. Pontifical High Mass was sung to the music by Mitterer. A recital took place in the evening, and the Rev. Father Zerr, organist of Farnborough Abbey, gave a fine selection of famous organ pieces. The new organ is partly screened by a handsome case, carved in oak, harmonizing with the style of the church. The tone is very full, and the reeds especially give a very good tone. The organ gives to the back of the church an effective decorative appearance. The organ was built and erected by Mr. Ph. Ziegler of Heidelberg, and is the gift of twenty members of the congregation. The rector, Rev. J. Mayer, who has labored at St. Boniface's for sixteen years, is to be congratulated on this handsome addition. In the evening a festival took place in the adjoining hall, where the rector said that he received the money within one week for the organ, from his people."

